



Impact OF British Colonization IN Socio-Ethical Status In Mizoram

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Abstract:

Mizoram is one of the seven states of North-Eastern India. It is a tribal state situated in the extreme corner of India. The historians believe that the Mizos usually migrated and occurred in groups from different periods under certain leaders. The area is 21,081 sq.km. and the population according to 2011 census is 10,90,014. Almost writers believe that the Mizo tribes belonged to the Tibeto-Burman Mongoloid group comprising many tribes having the same tradition and migrated from Burma towards the west of the Chindwin River in the 800—850 A.D. They moved from Chindwin river valley towards to Kabaw valley side by side with the Burmese. Their chief occupation is agriculture. In earlier period they had their own traditional culture and ethical status. Before British rule in Mizoram every village was under the authority of chief. This state was one of the districts of Assam after independence for a long time. The socio-ethical status of the present Mizoram brought under the control of British administration. The culture of chieftain and Zawlbuk were gradually abolished by themselves after the instruction of the Britishers. Even though they keep their traditional culture in their heart with high regard. The Mizos civilization occurred during the 20th century. In the year 1864 when the English missionaries occupied in the heart of the Mizos, since then Mizo culture has been almost changed. After the British colonization in Mizoram the socio-ethical status of the Mizos is being modified and adopted the western culture. They have three popular festivals namely; Chapchar Kut, Mim Kut and Pawl kut. In the ancient period in the year 1966 the Mizo army under the Mizo National Front, demanding freedom from India. Laldenga the Mizo National Front was the President of the organization. He established the Mizo National Famine in 1959 during the famine happened in Mizoram. The police superintendent appointed to look after the administrative of the land played an important role in the region till 1947.

Keywords: Traditional, culture, Zawlbulk, administration, and independent.

Introduction: Mizoram is a hilly place where tribes are settled widely. It is one of the states of north eastern region. The area of this state is 21,081 sq. Km. According to 2011 Census, the population of Mizoram is 1,091,014. This state is surrounded by Assam and Manipur in the north, Burma in the east and south, Bangladesh and Tripura in the west. Some scholars suggested that their migration took place as a continuous process starting from early 17th century to the first half of the 19th century. Some consider that they migrated from the cave

through south China, north Thailand, north Burma and last came into Mizoram. Some other scholars maintain that they usually occurred in groups or clans from different places at different periods, and lastly settled in Mizoram. Among the clans the Sailo the descendent of Thangur, became the most powerful ruling chiefs in Mizo cultural areas. The second part of the 19th century witnessed the most powerful ruling clan when the British came into Mizoram. The reason of becoming the Sailo clan as the most powerful kingdom is that they had better organisation and good internal and external administration. The earliest inhabitants were known as Kuki and the last clan were Lushai. The Mizo tribes are Kuki, Ralte, Paite and Hmar. In the earlier period the people of Mizoram were under the leadership of kingship and every village was under the authority of the king which was known as chief by the Britishers. Their main occupation was agriculture. In ancient time this state known as Lushai Hill. And later on known as Mizoram. They had their traditional culture and established unique code of ethics. After independence this state was one of the districts of Assam but after a long struggle they got independence.

Literature Review: L. S. Gassah (2007) book entitled Survey of Research in Political Science on the North East India 1970-1990 discusses about the political scenario of the traditional and British period of administration and post independence period. He also discusses the insurgent problem and the political situation in Mizoram during the post independence period upto the present day.

S.K. Ghosh and Prabhat Chopra (1980) book named Echoes from North Eastern India, explain on the geographical situation. In this book they discuss the task of the Mizo National Front and the establishment of the MNF.

J. V. Hluna (2013) book entitled History and Ethnic Identity Formation in the North Eastern India, discusses Chapchar Kut, impact of Christianity, pre-colonial and colonial period.

Malsawmdawngliana and Rohmingmawi (2013) book entitled Mizo Narratives Accounts from Mizoram, express about the geographical structure and origin of the socio cultural aspects of Mizoram.

Objectives of the present paper:

- 1) To discuss the socio cultural aspects of pre-colonial and colonial period of Mizoram.
- 2) To discuss the impact of British rule and the freedom of Mizoram.
- 3) To discuss the improvement of the socio-ethical aspects of the people of Mizoram.

Methodology: In this present paper I use both primary and secondary sources. In primary sources I visited at Saipui Village in Mizoram and saw the biggest cultural festival which is known as Chapchar Kut (Spring Festival) of Mizoram held there. In the secondary sources I collected materials from the seminar library of HRDC of Academic Staff College of Mizoram, journals, text books, web sites and took interview from both intellectual and anecdote persons.

Hypothesis Of the present paper: If the government of India with the partnership of the state government make some plans and policies for this state, then this state will become a brilliant state in India. Because it has plenty of natural resources and cultural identities. There is a necessity of sustainable effort from both sides.

Results and Discussions of the present paper:

Socio-Cultural aspects of pre-colonial periods: As the Mizos migrated from different parts as alien when they come they accompanied their traditional villagers themselves and they were under the authority of the king. Each village was independent and the chief was the most prestigious and high honoured person of the village. The villages selected the chief so that they could be guided and protected by the chief. The functions of the chief are administration, judicial, allotment of land for jhum cultivation, maintenance of Zawlbuk, Bawi etc. The Mizo chieftain originated and developed on its own without the influence from outside. The next person of importance in the village was khawnbawl Upa or simply elders. They are the members of the chief council and appointed by the chief. Other people in the traditional Mizo village were the Ramhual who were the experts of jhum cultivators and responsible for selecting plot for every year.

The other categories of Mizo society were the common cultivators who form the bulk of the population. They cultivated the land and fought all the war at the chief's will. Zawlbuk or bachelors dormitory was another important social institution prevalent among the Mizo tribes. In the society every youth before marriage or after marriage within 20 to 35 years has the necessity to join in the Zawlbuk. It is situated in the front of the chief's house. Their main functions are defending the village and the chief, protection of crops, construction of roads, organising festivals, sports and ceremonies. In Thailand every male youth within 30 to 35 years voluntarily join in the Buddhist institution for their conduct training before marriage. As the Mizos moved from China to Burma towards the Kobo valley they might accompany their culture of the Buddhist dormitory. N. Chatterji states that "Zawlbuk as a social institution in the Mizo society, endeavours to trace the processes of evolution, working and functions administration and the over all role and impact of this pristine, social institution, the Zawlbuk, among the Mizos."¹ (L.S.Gassah: Survey of Research in Political Science on North East India, Publication, 1999, New Delhi, p.no 63). Such institution which prevail in the early period of the history of the Mizos became a centre of social, religious and cultural activities.

Socio-Cultural Aspects of Post-Colonialism: Before British rule it was solely under the supervision of the king of the village, but after the British rule and the control of the Britishers, the social life of Mizoram is greatly influenced by the western culture. Besides, there is a social change in the morality of the people. Even the youth people have their couple life and they have children they have to spend every night in the Zawlbuk. Zawlbuk is like a institution situated in front of the house of the Chief so that they can protect the enemies of the villagers and the Chief. In fact, they are the warriors of the Chief. As they left their children and wives the neighbouring people and the enemies took advantage of

their own and misbehaved to their wives. So they had faced many family problems during their given period. But after the advice of the Britishers and make them understood the problems that they faced they gradually abolish such kind of institution. Really in this regard the English people are quite right to prevent such kind of crude culture otherwise the youths of this land have to struggle further more as a culture. The British Superintendents might have been known the problems of the family members of the Zawlbuk members they had faced in their lives.

Moreover, the kingship culture of the then also abolish by the British officers and everything was under the control and administration of the British. The Mizos had come into contact with the British when the British expanded their territory to the Chittagong hill tracts. After independence the British Superintendent appointed to look after the administration of Mizoram till 1947. Since the coming of British rule and culture the sub-ethnic identity were slowly losing and at the latest period the census report is started and classified them as Lushai, Kuki, Pawe, Lakher and Hmar. In fact, in the year 1894 two young English missionaries brought novel religion of deep Hebrew and Greek refined and thought. The Bible occupied a high place in the heart of the Mizos. Even since the Mizo culture had been almost changed completely by the Bible with far reaching effects. Really with the coming of the British administration specially the Superintendent and the impact thereof on the Mizos, 'forms another study interesting the political history of Mizoram and enrich the understanding of the political and administrative development in Mizoram.'² (L.S.Gassah: Survey of Research in Political Science on North-East India, Regendary Publication, 1999, New Delhi, p. no. 62). In place of Zawlbuk they establish church in every locality and these reasons affected to the people. Thus the social life of these people greatly influenced by the western culture.

Impact of British politics to the Mizos: The history of political administration in Mizoram officially begins from 1890 when the territory known as Lushai Hill. As the British planned to collect revenue and labour it makes, therefore, the root cause uprising of many chiefs against the British administration. Actually the chiefs did not prepare to accept their demand. Thus imposition of revenue and demands for labour was the most important aspects of the Mizos. After the British colonization, Mizoram was under the administration of Assam. After a struggle with the Assam government, this state became a Union Territory on 21st January 1972 became an independent state on 20th February 1987. During the British rule their biggest festival Chapcharkut could not held because it was prohibited to perform by the Britishers. As a result of this they could not held this festival for a long time. But after a long gap the British Superintendent permitted to perform this festival and since then the people of Mizoram have been performing this festival without any gap in the Saipui village at the campus of Assam Rifles. There are three major festivals in Mizoram. Chapchar Kut is the biggest and popular festival of Mizoram. This festival is closely related with jhum cultivation. These people celebrated Chapchar Kut festival in the month of spring season of March throughout everywhere in Mizoram but after independence on 20th February 1987 it has been held at Saipui Village in the campus of Assam Rifle without any

gap. It was started around 1450 to 1600 A.D. since time immemorial. There is a story of performing Chapchar Kut festival in Mizoram. It is said that once upon a time the female of the villagers used to go to the forest to cut the trees and bamboos dry and burn it for the next cultivation. When the Chief went for hunting in the forest he could not find any animal for hunting as the forest were already clear and burn it. As a result the chief returned to his home without catching anything. At the time being the wife of the chief heard that her husband arriving to home without any food. Before arriving her husband she arranged a big feast with her neighbouring for the chief. They celebrated a big festival with dance and music in front of the Chief's house. This kind of celebration is known as 'Chapchar Kut'. Hence, all the tribes and sub-tribes of Mizoram are celebrating this festival as a religious ceremony throughout Mizoram. It is celebrated before showing the grains in the field but nowadays it is undertaken after celebrating the festival. The most important thing related with this festival is that nowadays the whole history and culture of post colonization and after colonization of this state is shown in this festival. In the Chapcharkut festival many people come from different foreign countries and states of India to participate and attend the festival. The most wonderful and charming scenery is that when a music begins in the field the participants started to dance in the same notes and same rhythms in the field. Moreover, every participants dressed the same dress without any difference among them. It has been performing every year in the month of spring season. Before the British came into Mizoram the people of Mizoram held before showing the grains in the field but after independence they perform it after cropping the grains. And the people of Mizoram show their long journey of struggle against the British since 1901 upto the present status of the state.

Findings of the present paper:

1. Improvement of civilization after British rule.
2. Abolish of traditional culture and adoption of western culture.
3. The people have unity and integrity. And with these spiritual power the state becomes one of the independent states in India.

Conclusion: When we observe the socio-ethical status of Mizoram, being unity and integrity of these people, they could fight bravely with the British and Assam government and became an independent state. For this reason this state become during a short period a brilliant state in north-eastern region and second largest literacy rate in India. The people as being united they could improve and develop their social status during a short period. Like the Japanese the people of Mizoram are very industrious and sincere in their duty. After the coming of British rule and Christianity in this region the people has changed their religion into Christianity. Now, Christianity become as one of the popular religion in Mizoram.

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